

# The Four Guardians

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Summary: They were guardians, yes, but of children?

## 1. Manny's Intuition

Tsar Lunar

Lunanoff Prince

Man in Moon

These are the names he has been titled to.

MiM looked over the world, seeing the children once again. And smiling as he finds sleeping children with gold dust morphing above their heads.

Peace once more. But alas, it will not last long.

Perhaps it was his memory pulling up an old experience, or maybe paranoia has settled, but MiM felt as if this happiness will not last much longer.

It has been many years since the guardians were introduced to Jack Frost, the guardian of fun.

He smiles as he thinks of the boy, reminding greatly of someone else he once knew. He could never guess who, it has been so long. But he has bittersweet flashbacks when he sees Jack's white hair, cane, and mischievous attitude.

Nonetheless, he is happy with how the young boy has been fitting in with his new responsibility.

Jack has gained many more believers, starting to become as famous as the others.

The others, this vague notion spiraled Manny's thoughts elsewhere.

Specifically, on the other spirits running about the world.

There were many out there, some permitted, some not. MiM was only responsible for the guardians as a whole, but someone else chose the other spirits to survive and live on. Some were like North, never experiencing death but lives over a thousand years. Others were like Aster, something that already existed but was never noticed or seen by anyone.

Some were like Pitch, forming from something else but serving a different purpose.

Pitch. MiM's thoughts turned gloomy.

Kozmotis Pitchiner. A once good turned corrupted he was told. Even with all the fear and fright Pitch has brought, Manny still feels pity for the man. But he would still choose to push back his army without mercy when the chance comes, as shown in his history's past.

No matter how far or how hard his guardians were able to push, the Nightmare King came back stronger than last.

This time being no different.

He turns back, looking for three specific spirits roaming about.

He first finds the one haunting around the forest in Scotland. She darts back and forth through the branches, becoming only a blur.

He then finds the boy at home, surrounded by his loyal friends and family.

And lastly, the second girl capering through a field of flowers.

Manny smiles fondly at their faces, so young, so bright, they will be great assistance.

The three here are guardians, but of children?

MiM pondersâ€¦

\* \* \*

><p>Rise of the Guardians and How to Train Your Dragon belong to Dreamworks.<p>

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## 2. Pitch's Final Touches

Pitch hung onto the shadows, watching from a distance.

A few blocks away, Jack could be seen playing with a little girl. A five-year-old who was bundled up so much that you could only see her little button nose. They were both making a snowman, Jack helping the

child roll the large snowball.

Even from this distance, Pitch kept a keen eye on something specific. He waited until they were done, the two of them backing up in order to see their creation. It was a simple snowman with only two main snowballs and a carved face.

"Thanks for the help mister Frost! He's beautiful! Just like I drew him!" The girl flashed an unseen smile, causing the guardian to flash one of his own white smiles. He leapt, running on the wind, and waved good-bye as he flew out of sight.

Acting quickly, Pitch threw out some sand, allowing it to fling across the expanse. The sand stretch out until it was only a few grains wide, too small to be noticed by anyone at the moment. The aim was true and caught onto his target, creating a small dust devil to carry the delicate thing safely back to Pitch.

A snowflake was emanating a faint, blue glow on the fingertips of his hand. One of Jack's magic snowflakes continued to dance around the small twister. Once having it, Pitch called up a small stallion to come. The nightmare was no bigger than his hand, but it was intentional to have it so small.

"I need you to shadow him, but don't allow Jack to see you. Gather three of these flakes then come back."

The horse snorted, then took off to follow it's given orders. While they all had stopped attacking him some time ago, a few stubborn mares would refuse to obey him. This one was an exception, being that it was too small to do any sort of damage. Oh well, they are meaningless now that his new creations are ready.

Crawling on the floor, Pitch slipped through every shadow, stretching across the shadows until he reached his new domain. A hollow tree, a dead tree really, but the winter left all the trees bare. Even though the land was coated with white, it only left the shadows all the darker. So finding a way inside was no hassle.

Down, down, down he ventured. Continuing to spiral down the tallest tower, until reaching the castle that houses the Nightmare King.

It was improved over the years he has resided here, but it was still rather simple compared to his other lair. Of course, it was never meant to be a home just yet.

Pitch went even farther down, passing a multitude of charcoal-colored corridors. This maze was constructed by him, for him. Even if the Guardians were able to find him, they had no hope into passing through this maze to reach his best kept secret thus far.

The man in the moon may have seen him gathering the necessary materials, but has little to no clue on he is planning on doing exactly.

Reaching the last door, the living shadow entered quickly and quietly, leaving the halls as black as the darkest depths of the sea. On the other side, there was light, thought the environment was still plenty dark. There were four different hour glasses spinning in constant motion. All four were the same size, meaning that all four

were no taller than Pitch himself. The sand inside was as black as everything else around it, except it felt older, alive almost.

Off to the side, there was a small island table holding two other snowflakes. The light coming from the caged ice was weak against the fog of black, making the atmosphere that much colder. The third didn't help despite it's glow.

The King of Nightmares rose up to the container, and released the captures from their cages. The snowflakes only had a second of freedom before being snagged by the same tiny twister that the third snowflake was trapped in. All three were now being lead to one of the four large hour glasses.

The sand that was causing the glass to swirl stopped at Pitch's command, allowing him to open a hatch at the top. With no emotion, he poured the three magic snowflakes into the ebony sand. The sand in turn consumed the light, snuffing it, and writhing, twisting, squirming out of the glass chamber.

Pitch stood back as the sand drooped on the floor, split, and rose up in familiar shapes. The three new, but old, forms flew about. Each one looked exactly like the other, with their smiles stretching across their faces like one of a jack-o-lantern, each cackling at one another, watching with icy blue eyes.

"I want you to follow your brothers, and wait. Don't get too exited, but the fun is about to begin." Pitch then cracked as smile, breaking the black of his face.

The creatures screamed in joy, then left in order to wait semi-patiently for the war to start. Leaving a few ribbons of sand in their flight before leaving all together.

The hour glass went back into motion, and for once, Pitch didn't bother to fill it back up. Normally, the glass would be filled up to the rim with sand, but there was only enough to fill a third of it. It didn't matter, it was just enough to prepare another set when the nightmare came back with three more snowflakes. The others, however, were a different matter.

The other three glasses were filled with the sand, so much that it seemed there was nothing inside at all. But Pitch knew better, for he filled them as such. He looked fondly at them all, watching over them.

"I might not have my ideal heir, but these will do just as wellâ€|"

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North looked up at the moon, and felt a familiar rumble in the lower bowls of his stomach.

Something was going on, something of concern. But the moon continued to gaze on innocently, there was no moon beam, there was no eclipse, nothing. So North continued to stand there, stroking his beard for something to happen.

Pitch has been quite for a while, around half a century, so it could involve him. There believers were still strong, including Jack's growing numbers, so it couldn't be that. Even though winter is here, St. Nick still had a few weeks left before the less-than-ideal pressure of the holidays. What concern is there to be anxious about?

North was still standing there when Jack came around. He had his own place near Burgess, but he liked to come and visit whenever the chance comes up.

"Hey North! What'cha doing there? Shouldn't you be checking your list, checking it twice? Finding out who's naughty or nice?" He chuckled at his own joke, hanging upside-down from his staff.

At a normal occasion, the guardian of wonder would have made some sort of jest about Jack still being on the naughty list, but he remained silent. This did not go unnoticed by Jack, he righted himself and looked at North. Without missing a beat, he turned to look at what North was gazing at. The moon was still there, shining in the rising night.

"Did something happen? What is going on?"

"Nothing, at least, not yet." The first words to leave his mouth in the hour made a heavy impression.

"What do you mean? How long have you seen him?"

"Not long, about hour, hour and half."

There was a silence.

"Has he told you anything?"

Even with the event passed, Jack has yet to hear another peep from MiM. The subject is avoided for Jack's sake.

"Rest assured, I have not heard of him. Manny has only shown himself here when there is emergency, but no message is here. Not even moon beam."

It was rather strange, Manny only went out of cycle like this when something is off. Before, he would usually tell us, send a moon beam, or show the Guardian gem to warn them of danger. This was the one and only time that Manny has come with seemingly no bad intentions.

"Do we need to put up the lights?"

"No, nothing yet. Unless something big has happened, then we use lights. Manny might only be here to warn us of his concern."

"Ok, but still, should we tell any of the other about this?"

"Of course! But only Bunny at this time, Tooth and Sandy are very busy around the clock."

"But if I run into them-"

"Then you may warn them! But Jack, please-!"

"Ok, I'm on it!" Jack left swiftly out the open window, drowning out the warning from North with his own voice.

\* \* \*

><p>Jack flew through with wind, taking the scenic route to Bunny's place. The man in the moon may not have said anything, but that didn't mean that he wouldn't tell the others about what was happening. Or rather, what wasn't happening.</p>

The wind took him low, barely skimming over the tips of the houses. It was when he was passing a school that he made an abrupt stop. He looked at the school again, thinking that he had spotted a golden glow, but only seeing a light in one of the classrooms. He looked up, the moon shining well above his head. It was well passed any kid's bedtime, why was one still in school?

Looking closer, he realized that it was a high school he was looking at. Maybe some student was punished for something. Still, it was around midnight here, shouldn't a teacher have allowed the poor soul to go home?

He may have learned to take his Guardian title seriously now, but he was still a kid at heart, and his curiosity was very active at the moment.

A peek wouldn't hurt anyoneâ€|

Jack was then against the glass at a moment's notice, frosting the window pane at his touch. He peered in to see a boy at the far corner, reading a textbook, alone at midnight.

He looked like a normal teen, shoes, clothes, nothing out of the ordinary. He didn't look lost or confused, he just looked like a teen studying for a test the next day. But the fact that he was alone at this time of night seemed creepy.

He actually jumped when the boy turned his head to look at him.

Now this was strange, the teen looked about fifteen years-old, yet he was able to see him. Jack learned the hard way that children will eventually forget about the guardian, leaving their childhood to become adults. Jamie was that way, thought he impressed the Guardians by still believing at the age of thirteen.

But this boy, this boy, was looking at him with the same wide-eyed look as Jack. The teen stood up and moved left, never breaking eye contact with him. Jack was still looking when the boy reached the door, grasping for the handle.

Jack couldn't resist, it was too strange.

"Can you see me?"

The boy froze.

"Can you see me!?" He called louder, not sure if this was a good or bad thing.

Jack never got his answer, for the boy unfroze himself, turned off the lights, and bolted out the door. Leaving Jack with the open book as the only sign of the boy and what had happened.

Shell-shocked, hurt, and scared, Jack left the school far behind him. He was surprised that a teenager was able to see him, he was hurt that Jamie apparently gave up on him, and he was scared that he just didn't know what happened. Any kid that believed knew who he was at first sight, but this one seemed just as flustered as he was. Was this a sign of a kid being in denial? Knowing the truth but refusing it? It was weird.

But all thoughts left me when I saw something fly by me. It looked like Sandy's dream sand, but black.

Pitch.

I immediately struck out with my ice, the prospect of a fight starting up the adrenalin within me.

The thing cried out, then I was suddenly surrounded by the sand. Two different somethings started attacking me at once, one around my face while the other pummeled my mid-riff. Whatever it was, it wasn't Pitch's nightmares.

I let out a small shockwave, hearing them cry out and setting me free from their hold. I shot out a beam at one, relaxing slightly when I heard it stop mid-cry. One leftâ€!

The little guy gave chase, knowing that it would do no good in continuing the fight. But I was faster, swifter than it. The last one only managed to round the next two tree trunks before I froze it against the third.

With all three immobilized, I deemed it safe to investigate.

I kept my staff pointed towards the one on the tree, wanting it to stay down for me to see. Unfortunately, it was kept out of my mind when it processed what I was looking at. Twice in the same hour, I was left speechless.

The "thing" I was fighting, was me, but not. It was shaped like me, I guess I should say, it even had my staff in it's little hands. I couldn't have been more than three feet tall, and all the sand was loosely holding on to it's form. But the face was something else, while it mimicked my own, they eyes and mouth glowed an eerie, icy blue. Even with it's eyes closed, the cracks shone, and it's mouth was wide open to allow me to see the light.

Forget about Manny, North needs to see thisâ€!

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#### 4. Something Big

The four Guardians were seen surrounding a glass container. Within the container was the creature that Jack ran into, a literal, nightmarish version of the Guardian of Fun. The tiny being stood only two feet tall, and from Jack's description, there were three in one swarm. The guardians, the Tooth Fairy, St. Nicholas, the Easter Bunny, and the Sandman, watched as the trapped being slammed itself at the glass. The nightmare was caught under a glass case, an ornate thing normally used to display new toys.

The sand-Jack glowered at all of them, it's blue eyes emitting a wisp of energy. It held it's staff in two hands, looking like Jack when under attack. Whenever it hit the glass container, parts of it would shatter, only to reform the sand back into original form. No one questioned it, this was Pitch's corrupt dream sand.

Jack only flew around for only a few minutes, but he came back with a grand story and a warning. Seeing the frozen creature in the ice block was a good enough reason to gather the others.

"What do you think this means?" Tooth asked, hovering a safe distance away from the black sand.

"Has MiM said anything about this? Is Pitch planning an attack already?" Aster, the Guardian of Hope, was the only one brave enough to lean in for a closer look.

"I do not know Bunny, Manny has been here for while." North, the owner of the workshop they were all in, said truthfully.

"What do you mean 'Manny has been here for while?'" Aster questioned.

"He means that the moon has been hanging around for most of the night." Jack popped in, floating around North's shoulders.

"Really, what has he been saying?" Tooth's crown rose at her curiosity.

"That's the thing, he hasn't really said anything" At Jack's announcement, the three guests looked perplexed.

Sandy rose up soundlessly, raising his hand. After gaining some attention, golden sand formed into different shapes above his head. The moon, some type of ray coming from the moon, and profiles of North's face getting hit by the ray formed at Sandy's command.

"No, MiM has not told me anything. He only sits there up in sky." At

this, North points upward to the open window. The window showed the thing in question, for the moon could be seen clearly shining even through the clouds.

"Well, if nothing has been told yet, why send all of us here? Why not wait until Manny actually does tell us something?" The Easter bunny stood up on his hind legs, eyes meeting the Russian's.

"Think about it Bunny, it could already be a big problem! If we wait longer, the problem will only get bigger!"

"But North, we've never seen something this complex before. Surely Pitch wouldn't do anything drastic yet. For all we know, this nightmare was only a test! The first of many failures." Tooth tried to be the voice of reason, but she still took frightful glances at the mini-Jack.

"The first of many! What if he already made an army like last time? What if it's all armies of us?" Bunny was a philosopher for many centuries, and still is. It wasn't until he started interacting with the world again did he take up fighting.

"But how would he even do that? None of his previous nightmare creations formed anything but horses!" North argued.

"North's right, what could he use? This thing looks and acts too much like Jack to just be sand." Tooth, her opinion flipping with her personality, pointed out. Currently, the bipedal creature was trying to blast it's way out. Leaving something akin to frost or, more likely, shadows of Jack's strong ice blast.

"I don't know, black sand itself wasn't even possible before. The possibilities are limitless! Maybe the sand was already capable of mimicking other creatures, look at what Sandy does with his dream sand." Bunny, now gaining support from Tooth, shot back at North.

"Agreed, Sandy knows how his sand works. And Pitch's sand is Sandy's. Why not ask Sandy?" North stated.

"Hate to break it for you, but last I remembered, Sandy's powers weren't capable of acting without being in constant contact. Pitch is continents away and this little bugger is still fighting!" Bunny's statement was promptly followed by a bang from the glass.

"Correction! If sand is connected to children's minds, then Manny is able to leave dream sand alone. Pitch has something else controlling this nightmare so he doesn't have to." North explained.

"So, are you saying that someone who knows Jack is controlling the nightmare?" Silence meet Tooth's question.

If this was true, then Pitch has put Jack's existence in danger. If it truly is Jack's believers that are giving life to these creatures, then Jack's guardianship would be his downfall. You can't be a guardian of children without children who believe in you.

As the three continue their argument, the Sandman only watched. Unlike the others, he wasn't capable of communicating with words. So

he listened to their theories, and he didn't like what he heard. Jack was hovering next to Sandy, looking around for anything interesting. Sandy gave a sad look to the new guardian, even if Jack was over 300 years old, he was still too young. In Sandy's eyes, Jack was too much of a child. The way he lost interest, the way his eyes sparkled when he saw something fun, Jack died young and stayed young.

Actually, even in spiritual standards, Jack was still young. Sandy himself couldn't remember when he became guardian, and he barely recalled North's and Tooth's initiation.

A beam of light came into Sandy's peripherals, snapping him out of his thoughts. On the decorative tiles was a beam of moonlight, the moon itself glowing brighter than before. It seemed that Sandy was the only one who noticed, Jack was messing with the Yetis and the other guardians were still arguing.

"Guys, I really don't think this is the time for a holiday battle." Tooth could be heard over the festive fight.

Sandy tried jumping up, hoping that the sudden movement would capture their attention. No such luck.

"All I was trying to say was that he was making too much of a fuss over a day that won't come until months later!" Bunny said.

Sandy tried to fly to them, but Tooth's buzzing wings kept blocking him. Every time he found a way into the group, Tooth or her fairies would suddenly appear. Sandy huffed in frustration.

"But Christmas is my holiday, if it truly is like last time then Pitch would plan attack in December!" North's words were accompanied by wide gestures.

Sandy, having given up on the others, went to Jack. Jack stopped pestering Phil to listen to Sandy.

"But when has Pitch done the same exact thing twice? That would be too predictable!" Bunny stated.

North gave the rabbit a raised eyebrow, "And since when could talking bunny see future? If memory serves correct, than bunny only-"

"Hey guys, I think Manny is finally saying something."

The three older guardians looked at Jack, who was pointing at the ground. They could see a light over the guardian symbol on the floor. Then they looked up to see the moon pulsing through the window.

Without wasting any time, all five guardians stood around the lit area.

Within the light formed shadows, nothing at first, but slowly forming shapes. The first showed a nightmare, having wisps of shadow surrounding it. The eyes of the horse were blank, just like the real thing. Then the image shifted, forming a shadow of Jack. Only, this Jack was formed by a sand storm. The look alike had blank eyes as well, and giving off a twisted smirk of it's look-alike.

"Tooth was right, this sand-Jack is a type of nightmare." North stroked his beard, different types of strategies formed in his head.

The image changed again, showing the familiar silhouettes of the five guardians.

"Ok, Manny wants us to fix the problem. That's a no-brainer, but what do we need to know?" Bunny's gaze split to focus on the moon and shadows, not knowing where the answer will come from.

Manny provided the answer, by adding three new forms with the guardians.

"New guardians?" Tooth pondered.

"Wait, was this how you guys found out I was guardian?" Jack questioned. While they did explain the procedure to him multiple times, he never paid much attention. But after seeing it now, he wanted to know for sure.

"Yeah, it went something like this. Manny told us about Pitch returning, brought out the crystal and showed us your image." Tooth said.

"A crystal?"

"You'll see in a minute." The tooth fairy looked back down, expecting to see the blue gem to rise again.

Instead, the shadows only showed the three new faces. A close-up of their head could be seen slowly turning, showing all the dimensions of their faces. The first one was a female, with a small button nose and large eyes. The second one was something strange, it wasn't clear whether it was a boy or girl, but this being looked like a whisper. The third was a boy, having a short mop of messy hair and a thin face.

"Hold on a second, I've seen that face before!" Jack jumped and hovered right above the shadow. He took in the hair, the face, and what little body he could see, and it all seemed familiar somehow.

"The school! He was at the school! You know, the one I was telling you guys about!" Jack was ecstatic now, once remembering the face.

"He was the kid from the classroom! The one who saw me, the teenager! See? I told you I knew what I saw!" The boy flew to each of the older guardians, circling each for every proven point. His feet had yet touched the ground.

"Wait, Jack. Didn't you say that this boy was just an ordinary teen?"

"Uh, yeah. I didn't understand why he was able to see me, but he just seemed to be a regular kid studying for a test." Jack shrugged.

"I can't answer that mystery, but if this boy is just a regular teen, then I know who this girl is!" Now North seemed excited at knowing who

this teen was. In some ways, North acted more like a child than Jack did.

"Really who?" asked Tooth.

"Rapunzel."

"Rapunzel? Like, 'Rapunzel, Rapunzel let down your hair?'" joked Jack.

North chuckled, taking the joke seriously. "Well, the little one sure had the hair to play the part!"

During this little talk, Tooth had been very quiet. Her normal, erratic movements were mellowed. Her crown was flat on her head, her hands were wrung, and she was biting her lip. This wasn't lost to Sandy. He couldn't say anything though, and he was forced to pay close attention when MiM showed another image.

This was the 'Rapunzel' girl, but it showed her with extremely long hair. The 'whisper' creature was shown in a full body scale. It had a vague form of a limbless body, surrounded by a barely visible mist. The boy had it's profile next to another, larger profile. The second one was inhuman, and it seemed to be surrounding the boy form view.

"What is that?!" Bunny crouched down on all fours, ears stood up tall and alert. It was obvious that his 'fight' instincts were active.

"I have no idea." North took a closer look at the shadow.

"You don't think?"

"Well, if Pitch was able to make a night-sprite of Jack!"

Aster pivoted to face Jack, startling the smaller one to drop to the floor.

"Jack, where did you find this boy?"

"At the Burgess High School not too far from here."

Two pats from the rabbit's hind leg opened a tunnel. Without any warning, he snagged the cold boy's hoodie and forced the two of them down the hole. The tunnel closed, leaving only a single flower and the faded calls of Jack's yells.

"Well, it seems Bunny was eager to start this mission!" North turned to his desk, shuffling through the pile of papers on top of it. Taking out one sheet, he returned to face the Sandman. Giving the sheet to the tiny man, North explained his plan.

"Sandy, this sheet is about this Rapunzel girl. She has been on the nice list for years, living in another orphanage every year. This is her current location, find her, come back, and wait for the others."

Nodding, the golden man formed a hot air balloon to leave North's workshop. Now it was just the tooth fairy and St. Nick. By now, Tooth looked really uncomfortable.

"Well, now that solves two problems. But what could we do with this odd spirit?"

"It's called a wisp."

"Hmmâ€|" North looked at Tooth, surprised that she was here. She was far too quiet and he actually thought she left to tend to her duties.

"What did you say Tooth?"

Sighing, she repeated herself. "I said that this creature is known as a wisp."

"So you know where to find this, wisp you say?"

"As far as I know, she hasn't left the forest in Dun'Broch since she was formed."

"She?"

"There is a legend pertaining to her, butâ€|"

"But?"

Tooth stopped talking, she only stared at the ground. After a few seconds of silence did she look North back in the eye.

"I'll find her and explain what is going on."

"What about this legend you spoke of?"

"She will tell you herself."

Leaving it at that, she flew out of the building.

Bunny and Jack were tracking the boy in the classroom, Sandman was looking for Rapunzel, and Tooth was going to retrieve this wispy-girl. These three were specifically summoned, from the Man in Moon himself, to help the guardians against Pitch. The King of Nightmares, the person who was almost able to destroy the Big Four. The boogeyman, who had a whole swarm of black sand being created under all their noses. This man has crawled back out of his hidey-hole to strike once more at the children. This man becoming such a hazard, that we need these being to succeed in battle. A battle was coming, one that change everything.

North turned to the closest Yeti, "Why does all the fun happen when it's my busy time?"

The Yeti in question only shrugged.

\* \* \*

><p>Brave and Tangled belong to Disney,</p>

How to Train Your Dragon and Rise of the Guardians belong to Dreamworks.

(Inspired by the minds of Cressida Cowell and William Joyce.)

## 5. Recruiting: Rapunzel

Sandman could be seen floating in his hot air balloon, a golden light hanging in the sky. The travel was slow going but the address on Nicholas's list wasn't far from Burgess. As he was flying by, he would send out ribbons of sand to the widows where the children slept. Guardian or not, he still had a job to do.

The sand trails swirled and flowed like fog would over a river. Instead of wisps out of place the trails would spill out different creatures. Dolphins leaped out and weaved back in twos and threes, deer pranced on top then hide away in sand, mythical creatures like fairies or pixies flew out of line before coming back in unison. Each creature would split from the main trail to each house, dissolving and reforming into the child's desired thought.

Sandy smiled when he could feel his sand cover the child's eyes and ease them into a deeper sleep. A few of his grains would stay in the crevices of their eyes but he left them be. The farther he went the more and more sand he dispersed, but he would still take an occasional glance to make sure he was heading in the right direction.

Now exiting Burgess, the sand traveled to catch up with the kids dozing in the cars. The town where Rapunzel is at is in the nearby town of Bridgeport. A smaller town compared to their neighbors and the home of the girl he was looking for.

The little man in the sky let the sand balloon disperse and form into a cloud for him to travel on. Here he hovered over the main square to double check the address. Allowing the sand to travel on its own, he split the cloud to float across the streets. Building after building he checked the streets and numbers to make sure he was going in the right direction. He only stopped when he was by a humble structure with vines wrapping snugly with the bricks.

"Paradise Orphanage" was engraved into the old stone, cracked and worn from the years it has been placed upon the wall.

This was the place.

The little golden man peeked through the windows, spreading sand as he went. He was looking for a blonde-headed child with abnormally long hair. From what one could gather from the shadow silhouettes that MiM gave him, then the future guardian's hair had to be passed the knees at least. The problem was, one couldn't paint an accurate picture only using shadows. Sandy didn't fully know if the guardian is alive or not, it was all very confusing.

If the girl was a spirit, then she would emit a low glow. Something about spirits, they have this certain aura about them that seem to illuminate their surroundings. But then, why would a spirit choose to stay at an orphanage? Could she be a spirit who doesn't have to work daily like he does? Or is she a child's spiritual caretaker? Those were very rare, but not unheard of.

Sandy gave out a silent chuckle as he shook his head. Daydreaming,

once more! Though it is rather early, would it still count as a "day" dream? A ponder for laterâ€!

Inside the rooms were rather bare, but still humble. The beds weren't fancy and the off-white walls and rugs didn't help much. There were few beds empty, both of a child and anything else about them. But, oh, the walls over the ones asleep had papers depicting pictures of the child's mind. A whole fantasy painted by clumsy fingers and waxy crayons. A knight in a round table, a horse and his cowboy, a girl in a tower, to Sandy they looked as memorizing as his dream sand. They even mimicked his sand by floating above their sleeping heads!

As much as the mute admired the image in the window, there was no sign of a golden lock. Widow to window, he didn't see any golden strands peeking from the little heads. He was on the second floor, then the third floor and still couldn't find Rapunzel. He would have given up there if he didn't hear singing.

A bell sung the notes, hitting the notes with delicacy if that was possible. Sandy followed the noise to the back of the building, where the song was coming from. He drifted down, wanting to hear as much as the song before he interrupted.

It truly was a song to remember, Sandy closed his eyes as he listened to the lyrics.

â€|\_Bring back what once was mine.\_

\_Heal what has been hurt\_

\_Change the fate's design\_

\_Save what has been lost\_

\_Bring back what once was mineâ€|\_

There was a garden in the plot of land behind the building, a small thing that had only a few buds of flowers and a small pumpkin. But sitting on the bench among the plants was a girl. Her eyes were a light green, brighter than any emerald. Her hair flowed pasted her shoulders, her waist, her ankles and across the rest of the two acres.

Sandy's eyes opened wide, mouth gaping as he took in the true length of the hair.

\_What once was mine.\_

The girl's voice ceased she looked up to see Sandy with is mouth open. A childish chuckle mimicked a chime, but how does cold, hollow metal be copied by something that has such warmth? Then again, why is this child outside when the others are asleep? Surely there is someone who makes sure every one is tucked in right?

Both worried and curious, Sandy floated to the ground where he could communicate better. Rapunzel only giggled more at the little golden man coming towards her. She bounced on the spot in excitement.

Sandy hovered just a few inches off the ground in front of the maybe-guardian and waved in greeting.

"Why, hello good sir! Isn't it a fine night to be outside?"

Sandy nodded his head, but made a question mark concerning his feelings. As soon as the sand appeared the girl's eyes brightened ever brighter.

"Oooo!"

Rapunzel leaned forward and slowly reached her fingertips to the sand, as one would do to a butterfly's wing. Before she could touch it however, Sandy made the form burst like a firework and disappear. If possible, Rapunzel's eyes grew wider.

"How did you do that?"

The Sandman smiled. There was something about how she said that, the pure awestruck wonder that practically glowed from her being. It was like a child was talking to him instead of a teenager, so pure, so innocent, how could he refuse to show her more?

Beckoning the blonde closer, he twisted his wrists to form a whirling ball of his golden sand. The ball hovered and sparkled in midair until Sandy's finger poked the sphere. The sand then blossomed and bloomed out long strands of sand, the petals growing in size. The wisps of rivers coming from this flower had butterflies and honeybees hovering in the air around them. The sand gave these creatures a light they normally don't have and made them shine like fireflies in the night.

Throughout it all, Rapunzel could only watch the spectacle in a trance. She 'oooh-ed' and 'aaaahh-ed' at the transformations and giggled when a sand creature danced through her hair. There was a particular butterfly that made her jump up and chase it around the little garden. Sandy, having fun as well, focused on teasing the girl. He let the insect fly slow for her to catch up and then flutter the wings just out of reach from grabby fingers.

Eventually, the girl stopped and dropped to the ground, chuckling lightly from her fun.

"So you're the one who brings those yellow creatures every night!"

She twirled onto her stomach so she wouldn't have to talk to Sandy upside-down.

"You're the one who brings in those yellow animals to play above the heads in there!" Rapunzel kicked as she talked.

"But why do you visit here now? Why didn't you visit all the other times?"

The simple, curious question snapped Sandy into shock. The innocent girl and her play distracted him from what he came here for. Standing silent for a moment, Sandy then tried to mime the Moon's request. Rapunzel looked at the little man and the sand popping out above his head. Putting two and two together, she figured out that he wanted to say something to her.

"Is this a game? A guessing game? Like charades?!"

Rapunzel got up to sit on her knees, hopping in place in merriment.

"I love games! I saw a crescent above your head, is it about the moon? Space! Is it about space? A spaceman, are you pretending to be a spaceman!? No, waitâ€¢ ALIENS!"

As the girl kept rambling on, the moving sand died as Sandy's question halted. He watched as the girl slowly waited for the imaginary game to continue before losing interest and humming her song.

Sandy, remained silent.

He watched as the girl's humming turned into a song, the same lyrics pouring from her lips as before. Her hair, Sandy realized, started to glow like a sunbeam. The new golden light lit the strands from her scalp to tip, making his sand and personal glow seem dim in comparison.

Sandy remained silent.

He only watched as he was the little girl continue her song, lying down on her back to see the stars, probably imagining the space adventure she was thinking of.

Sandy remained silent as he watched the child.

No matter that the girl was a juvenile; the Guardian of Dreams was looking at a little girl. A little girl who has been wandering for who knows how long with other children to play with. That is the life she has been living, just a never-ending play day. She has no direction that she needs to be going, she is just following her own childish intuition. She's on Nicholas's list as well, so childlike in mind and matter that the magic thought she was one.

A child, the Man in the Moon wanted a child to assist in fighting off Pitch. Sandy looked at the white orb, a cloud masking the face.

Why would Manny ever want to put a child in a battlefield?

\* \* \*

><p>How to Train Your Dragon and Rise of the Guardians belongs to Dreamworks, <p>

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## 6. Recruiting: Merida

Toothinia's flight was swift and frantic, sporadically dashing in and out of line as she traveled. She knew exactly where she was going, and she wished that she didn't have to return. She flinched as she spotted a tree, followed by another, and another, until it too soon turned into a great forest below her.

Stopping, she hovered in mid-air before reluctantly darting towards

the ground. Now passed the tops of the trees, Tooth was at ground level where she could no longer see the sky.

Still she hovered, tiny feet inches above the grass. Her brilliant crown was pressed onto her head, feathers overly bright in the darkened forest. Tooth's violet eyes darted from tree to tree, her brain managing to process even with her spastic movement.

This was the place, but just to be sureâ€¦

The Guardian of Memory held up the cylinder she has been carrying, the golden case cold from the northern air. She had it firmly grasped in her hand as she traveled across the ocean to Scotland. Tooth's fingertips glided over the blue diamond and watched as the memory replayed itself.

She was no phantom stepping into a scene; she was a watcher who stuck her head into the screen of a movie. There were no conflicting thoughts as if she was the child, she was Toothinia boring into another life. Here she saw the eyes of a child, a young lad who plowed the forest floor with stubby fingers.

His family wished to pass through the forest in order to reach the city of DunBroch. They needed to rest after their trip and chose an inn along the path to the long-living castle, only to have their son loose a tooth when playing outside. The young lad hoped to find it before going to sleep, he wished to have the Tooth fairy come and visit!

However, he wandered a bit too far into the forest, not that he mindedâ€¦

But there was a whisper, a voice in the woods. His baby tooth forgotten, he pulled his head up to see what it was. There was nothing, but as soon as he leaned back down he heard it again, the whisper. The boy got up to get a closer look, peering past the trunk of the tree in front of him.

Nothing.

Looking down, he saw an oddly colored rock. A pebble, very white and looked like a toothâ€¦

Realizing that he found his missing molar, he picked it up and started to make his way back to his parents. The child stopped when he also realized he had no idea where the inn was. He was never good at mazesâ€¦

Before he starts crying, he hears the voice again. This time, there were words coming from the mystery person.

\*\*Come here!\*\*

He turns around, looking at the invisible person. "W-who's there?" His eyes were watery and he just wished to be back home with mommy and daddy!

\*\*This way!\*\*

The boy walked to the voice off to his right, poking his head around

once more. "Do you know where my mommy and daddy are?"

\*\*\_I know!\_\*\*

\_ "You do? Where-"

\_ The boy screamed as he saw the speaker of the voice and ran the other direction. He kept screaming and running until he tripped, then he screamed some more.\_

\_ His parents found him lying on the ground, his tears dropping great globs of water onto the earth. He calmed after a hug from his mother and noticed that his molar was no longer in his hand.\_

\_ "M-m-my t-too-t-tooth." He blubbered.\_

\_ "Here it is." His father held up the white speck.\_

\_ "He must have seen his tooth fall out and panicked." \_

\_ "Don't worry son, your tooth is fine!" \_

\_ Before the boy could reply, he saw the lady in the woods behind his mother and father. He started bawling.\_

\_ "Richard! Put that away, you're frightening him!" \_

\_ "Sorry hunâ€| \_

It was here that the scene ended, where Toothinia is now standing.

From the moment she bore witness to the shadowed figure that MiM showed her, she questioned the moon's choice in allies. Often it was Bunny who dared openly questioned Manny, and often with sharp and appointed facts, but Tooth had faith within Manny. Now however, she can't help but wonder why Manny would ever deal with such a wild card.

The woman she is now searching for is the woman who frightened the little boy from the memory flash, and helped a little girl in another. Any child who retained memories of the wild spirit that "haunts" DunBroch's forest were always from Scotland at the time. More than likely, these very woods Tooth is in is the only dwelling that this being stays.

No human has ever actually interacted with this spirit before, and truthfully, most other spirits avoid her.

This is not just of rumors, hardly anything is known about her, but of something more ancient. When the forest was being colonized on, people have already noted the presence in the woods. Beings that were almost like siriens, calling forth all who enter the woods, but they lead them to their fate. The creatures are widely known as willow-o-wisps, or just wisps to the locals. And if it wasn't for the few children who lost teeth here, no one would ever know of their queen.

The fairy could only assume that they always had a queen, someone who says what action is to take place and so forth. Not quite unlike how

she herself runs her Tooth Palace. But with so little to compare to, all Tooth can do is assume baseless theories.

It is one of the main reasons why she disagrees with MiM's decision in choosing the queen in the first place. Jack was a wild card himself, but he was known to be friendly -if a bit mischevious-towards others. There were no bad or "evil" reports of him or his actions during his free riegn of 300 years. But with the willow queen, Tooth was one of the few who knows what she looks like in her lifetime, let alone in how long the queen has lived! None could have ever predicted if she worked for good or bad reasons.

But Manny saw something, and she hoped that he was right...

A soft cry broke through the foliage, and it was there that Tooth saw -for her own eyes- a wisp. The miniscule creature was no bigger than one of her crest feathers, and quietly hovered in front of her. The blue of the creature could have strangly been hidden in the leaves and moss, the lighter, glowing blue was an amplafied version of the shadowed greens. The flickering movements flowed like liquid fire, for there were no embers, flecks, or sparks shooting out of the creature. The "head" of the creature was bulbus and was easliy larger than it's "body." It had two glowing blue orbs acting as eyes, lighting off and on as if it was blinking.

For something that looked rather innocent, Tooth couldn't help but shudder at its sudden appearance. Her knees and arms curled inwards and her longest crest was resting at the nape of her neck. She knew, she knew...

Some of the children who followed the wisps never lost another tooth. It hurt knowing that one of her containers would remain incomplete.

Although, as she sees more wisps appears, it hurts also knowing that she had no choice but to follow them.

They watched and disappeared as she flew over and passed them, only to have another appear that instant to continue her flight. She flew at a safe, but accelerated pace, and yet the little beings remained ahead of her. On and on they went, with only the wisps hollow coos to reach Tooth's ears. Tooth only slowed when she came across a set of rock slabs planted vertically in a complete and perfect circle. The slates were clean, free of moss and erosion. The carvings could be seen and there were no dirt patches on the long grass below her feet. The only sign of damage was the not-quite visable crack that ran along one of the rocks, along with the fading scars of animal scratches on it.

Tooth blinked, and there was the queen.

She was much larger than the willows from before, about as tall as the tooth fairy. She hoverd with no wings, but had the same liquid flames swaying in their own wind. This time her body was larger than her head, clearly showing a limbless, female figure. Her head was only "attached" to her body by a slim, skinny neck, and bore the same eye-orbs as the other wisps.

The queen smiled -how Tooth could tell she didn't know- and nodded.

Tooth then found herself flying back north, with the Willow Queen flickering back and forth behind her.

Fate was funny like that...

\* \* \*

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End  
file.